

CLAIMS

We claim:

1. A method for electronically executing contracts within a secure computer infrastructure, comprising:

obtaining contract information from a receiving contract partner;

creating a contract within the secure computer infrastructure based on the contract information;

requesting approval of the contract within the secure computer infrastructure from an originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner;

requesting execution of the contract within the secure computer infrastructure from the receiving contract partner and the originating contract partner after the contract is approved by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner; and

generating a final image of the contract within the secure computer infrastructure after the contract is executed by the receiving contract partner and the originating contract partner.

2. The method of claim 1, where the step of requesting approval of the contract from the originating contract partner comprises communicating an electronic approval notification to the originating contract partner, wherein the electronic approval notification contains a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

3. The method of claim 2, further comprising:

receiving login information from the originating contract partner;

authenticating the login information;

providing the originating contract partner with access to the contract within the secure computer infrastructure if the login information is authenticated; and

receiving an approval determination from the originating partner.

4. The method of claim 1, where the step of requesting approval of the contract from the receiving contract partner comprises communicating an electronic approval notification to the receiving contract partner after approval by the originating contract partner, wherein the electronic approval notification contains a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

5. The method of claim 4, further comprising:

receiving login information from the receiving contract partner;

authenticating the login information;

providing the receiving contract partner with access to the contract within the secure computer infrastructure if the login information is authenticated; and

receiving an approval determination from the receiving partner.

6. The method of claim 1, where the step of requesting execution of the contract from the originating contract partner comprises communicating an electronic execution notification to the originating contract partner, wherein the electronic execution notification contains a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

7. The method of claim 6, further comprising:

receiving login information from the originating contract partner;

authenticating the login information;

providing the originating contract partner with access to the contract within the secure computer infrastructure if the login information is authenticated; and

receiving an execution determination from the originating partner.

8. The method of claim 1, where the step of requesting execution of the contract from the receiving contract partner comprises communicating an electronic execution notification to the receiving contract partner, wherein the electronic execution notification contains a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

9. The method of claim 8, further comprising:

receiving login information from the receiving contract partner;

authenticating the login information;

providing the receiving contract partner with access to the contract within the secure computer infrastructure if the login information is authenticated; and

receiving an execution determination from the receiving partner.

10. The method of claim 1, further comprising tracking all actions taken by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner in a database according to time, date and an IP address.

11. The method of claim 1, wherein the secure computer infrastructure is secured using encryption.

12. The method of claim 1, further comprising registering the receiving contract partner prior to the obtaining step, wherein the registering step comprises:

obtaining profile information for the receiving contract partner;

communicating a URL corresponding to the secure infrastructure to the receiving contract partner; and

providing login information to the receiving contract partner upon selection of the URL.

13. The method of claim 12, wherein the registering step further comprises checking a credit of the receiving contract partner.

14. The method of claim 1, wherein a status of the contract is indicated as “Submitted” after the contract is generated, wherein the status is indicated as “New” after approval by the originating contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as “Ready to Sign” after approval by the receiving contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as “Signed” after execution by the receiving contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as “Countersigned” after execution by the originating contract partner, and wherein the status is indicated as “Complete” after the final image is generated.

15. The method of claim 1, further comprising receiving an issue list from the receiving contract partner if approval of the contract by the receiving contract partner is not obtained.

16. The method of claim 1, further comprising blocking out comments input by the receiving contract partner is approval of the contract by the receiving contract partner is obtained.

17. A system for electronically executing contracts within a secure computer infrastructure, comprising:

a contract creation system for creating a contract within the secure computer infrastructure based on contract information obtained from a receiving contract partner;

a contract approval system for requesting and receiving approval determinations for the contract within the secure computer infrastructure from an originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner;

a contract execution system for requesting and receiving execution determinations for the contract within the secure computer infrastructure from the receiving contract partner and the originating contract partner after the contract is approved by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner; and

an image generation system for generating a final image of the contract within the secure computer infrastructure after the contract is executed by the receiving contract partner and the originating contract partner.

18. The system of claim 17, further comprising a registration system for obtaining profile information for the receiving contract partner, and for communicating a URL corresponding to the secure infrastructure to the receiving contract partner.

19. The system of claim 18, wherein the registration system further checks a credit of the receiving contract partner.

20. The system of claim 17, wherein the contract approval system communicates separate electronic approval notifications to the originating contract partner and to the receiving contract partner, wherein the electronic approval notifications each contain a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

21. The system of claim 17, wherein the contract execution system communicates separate electronic execution notifications to the originating contract partner and to the receiving contract partner, wherein the electronic execution notifications each contain a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

22. The system of claim 17, further comprising an authentication system for authenticating login information for the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner.

23. The system of claim 17, further comprising a security system for securing the secure computer infrastructure using encryption.

24. The system of claim 17, further comprising an activity tracking system for tracking all activities by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner within the secure computer infrastructure according to time, date and IP address.

25. The system of claim 17, further comprising a status system for maintaining a status of the contract, wherein a status of the contract is indicated as "Submitted" after the contract is generated, wherein the status is indicated as "New" after approval by the originating contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as "Ready to Sign" after approval by the receiving contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as "Signed" after execution by the receiving contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as "Countersigned" after execution by the originating contract partner, and wherein the status is indicated as "Complete" after the final image is generated.

26. A program product stored on a recordable medium for electronically executing contracts within a secure computer infrastructure, which when executed, comprises:

program code for creating a contract within the secure computer infrastructure based on contract information obtained from a receiving contract partner;

program code for requesting and receiving approval determinations for the contract within the secure computer infrastructure from an originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner;

program code for requesting and receiving execution determinations for the contract within the secure computer infrastructure from the receiving contract partner and the originating contract partner after the contract is approved by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner; and

program code for generating a final image of the contract within the secure computer infrastructure after the contract is executed by the receiving contract partner and the originating contract partner.

27. The program product of claim 26, further comprising program code registering the receiving contract partner, wherein the program code for registering obtains profile information for the receiving contract partner, and communicates a URL corresponding to the secure infrastructure to the receiving contract partner.

28. The program product of claim 27, wherein the program code for registering further checks a credit of the receiving contract partner.

29. The program product of claim 26, wherein program code for approving communicates separate electronic approval notifications to the originating contract partner and to the receiving contract partner, wherein the electronic approval notifications each contain a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

30. The program product of claim 26, wherein the program code for executing communicates separate electronic execution notifications to the originating contract partner and to the receiving contract partner, wherein the electronic execution notifications each contain a link to the secure computer infrastructure.

31. The program product of claim 26, further comprising program code for authenticating login information for the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner.

32. The program product of claim 26, further comprising program code for securing the secure computer infrastructure using encryption.

33. The program product of claim 26, further comprising program code for tracking all activities by the originating contract partner and the receiving contract partner within the secure computer infrastructure according to time, date and IP address.

34. The program product of claim 26, further comprising program code for maintaining a status of the contract, wherein a status of the contract is indicated as “Submitted” after the contract is generated, wherein the status is indicated as “New” after approval by the originating contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as “Ready to Sign” after approval by the receiving contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as “Signed” after execution by the receiving contract partner, wherein the status is indicated as “Countersigned” after execution by the originating contract partner, and wherein the status is indicated as “Complete” after the final image is generated.